

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Girard College
AND/OR COMMON
Girard College

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Corinthian and Girard Avenues
CITY, TOWN
Philadelphia
STATE
Pennsylvania
VICINITY OF
CODE
42
COUNTY
Philadelphia
CODE
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#2
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
The Board of Directors of City Trusts
STREET & NUMBER
1601 Spring Garden Street
CITY, TOWN
Philadelphia
VICINITY OF
STATE
Pennsylvania

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Register of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
Philadelphia City Hall, Broad and Market Streets
CITY, TOWN
Philadelphia
STATE
Pennsylvania

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
None
DATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

CHECK ONE

CHECK ONE

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Founder's Hall, the impressive and dominant structure of the five original buildings at Girard College, is still the most interesting edifice on the school's grounds. A broad flight of steps leads to both the north and south entrances. As one mounts the top step at either front, he passes between two of the huge Corinthian columns that dignify both entrances and both sides. A tall, massive door dominates the wall of the north front, and a door about half its height breaks the wall of the south front.

Just beyond either the north or south door is a vestibule. Ionic columns support the ceiling in the center of both vestibules. In each of the corners in the vestibules is a marble stairway that ascends for three floors. The balusters in each stairway are of cast iron. A skylight in the roof at each corner turns each corner into a light well, which enhances the grace of the stairways. Both vestibules are alike, except that the south vestibule holds the sarcophagus of the school's founder. Girard, in marble, stands before his tomb.

The area between the two vestibules was originally divided into four rooms. Each room had a vaulted ceiling and marble pillars between the windows. Today, the first floor contains three rooms in pristine condition. One is known as the Girard Room, it containing furnishings and furniture from Girard's home. This room possesses a singular interest because it is still graced by the original floral decoration on the ceiling and along the upper parts of the room's four walls. The Board Room adjoins the Girard Room on the east, and two similar rooms lie just to the north. One of these rooms has been turned into a kitchen and lounge, but not to the permanent detriment of the building.

The second and third floors also contain four rooms each. Those on the second floor are used for student activities, those on the third floor have been closed.

Founder's Hall is excellently maintained and suffers from no defects in its construction.

Immediately to the east and west of Founder's Hall are two pairs of buildings, the original dormitories for students and teachers, as dictated by Girard in his will. From west to east the first pair are Merchant Hall and Mariner Hall, and the second, Bordeaux and Allen Halls. The two inside halls are 144' from Founder's Hall and 87' from the respective outside halls. Each measures 52' wide by 125' in length, and is three stories tall with a basement raised 7' above the ground. They are all faced with marble and are roofed with copper or tin. The dormitories have gable roofs, and Bordeaux and Allen Halls had dormers added in the 1930's. The entrances on the south facades have a double tier of steps leading up to four Ionic pilasters supporting a simple pediment. Allen Hall was originally divided into four separate dwelling houses for the president and officers of the college. It is used today as student dormitories. Bordeaux Hall, which was repaired on its eastern side in 1972 and is still used as a student dormitory. Mariner Hall which is no longer fully used, served as the kitchen and refectory as well as a dormitory for subordinate officers and servants. Merchant Hall which is no longer in use was used as a dormitory. In the courts between the buildings of

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1848 -founding date BUILDER/ARCHITECT Thomas U. Walter

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Girard College, since its opening on January 1, 1848, has remained an outstanding example of the philanthropic support of education in America. The college has trained and educated hundreds of boys for adult life who otherwise might have been deprived of a good education because of adverse economic circumstance.

Established by the bequest of Stephen Girard, the Philadelphia merchant, the college on Girard Avenue in Philadelphia continues its humanitarian services today.

History

The remarkable institution arose from the generosity of an outstanding Philadelphian, Stephen S. Girard. Girard, who was born on May 20, 1750, in Bordeaux, France, lost his mother in 1762, went to sea in 1764, and became a licensed sea captain in 1773. By 1774, the young master had migrated to New York, where he became the half-owner and master of the ship, La Jeune Babe. The American Revolution soon disrupted commerce, and after a difficult trip from the West Indies early in the summer of 1776, Girard sailed into Philadelphia. It was here that he settled for life.

Girard's fortunes rose rapidly following the Revolution. Despite the dangers stemming from the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Girard's fleet of ships accomplished numerous commercial coups. At Philadelphia, Girard also became involved in real estate operations and important financial undertakings. Just before the War of 1812, he organized the Bank of Stephen Girard; and following the war, he contributed importantly to the founding and development of the Second United States Bank. He became one of the latter bank's directors, but subsequently withdrew from the institution when he disagreed about its management. He spent his last years on his farm in South Philadelphia, where he died on December 26, 1831.

By means of his will, Girard left most of his valuable estate to the citizens of Philadelphia and Pennsylvania. Some \$140,000 was left to relatives and various charities \$300,000 was left to the Commonwealth for internal improvements; \$500,000 was left to the City of Philadelphia; and property worth over \$6,000,000 was left to the City for the education of poor white boys. (Expanded in recent years to both sexes and all races).

Girard's interest in things of the mind is suggested by the names he gave some of his boats, such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Voltaire. Perhaps Girard's difficult early years had spurred the growth of his great interest in education, especially for poorer boys. In any event, for decades before his death he helped to educate many young people, members of his family and the children of friends. Long before

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry W. Arey, The Girard College and its Founder (Philadelphia, 1852).
Cheesman Herrick, History of Girard College (Philadelphia, 1927) and
Stephen Girard, Founder (Philadelphia, 1923).
Ellis B. Oberholtzer, Philadelphia, A History of the City and its People 4 vols.
(Philadelphia, n.d.).
Wilfred Wolcott, Background of the Educational Provisions of the Will of Stephen
Girard (Philadelphia, 1948).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 41 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	118	484740	4424710	B	118	485580	4424830
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	118	485700	4424620	D	118	484790	4424410
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Beginning at the intersection of the north curbs of Poplar Street and S. College Avenue proceed east along the north curb of S. College Avenue to its intersection with the west curb of Ridge Avenue, then north along said curb to its intersection with the south curb of N. College Avenue, then west along said curb to the east curb of W. College Avenue, then south along said curb to its intersection with the north curb of Poplar Street, then east along said curb to the point of origin. This

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Richard Greenwood, Historian, Landmark Reveiw Task Force

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

2/11/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street

TELEPHONE

202/523-5464

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ____

STATE ____

LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Girard College (Founder's Hall)

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each pair was a walled garden and the student's privys. Today this areas are open courtyards.

A fifth building which served as a laundry, bakery and class room has been destroyed. The original six structures were enclosed on the forty-one acre tract by a ten foot high wall of rubblestone capped with marble. This wall is still standing, enclosing the college, with an entrance gate just south of Founder's Hall. The land which was originally open is now largely covered with new structures, playgrounds and playing fields.

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CONTINUATION SHEET History

ITEM NUMBER 8

PAGE 2

his demise, also, he began to think about a school for poor boys, perhaps as early as 1807. The amount of time and thought that he gave to that concept must have been considerable, for his will provides for every aspect of the school he founded. Upon Girard's death, his heirs sought to break his will, but managed to increase their inheritance only in a small degree.

Several decades passed before Girard College, as the institution became known, achieved a firm footing. Girard had stipulated that the school be managed by the Mayor and Aldermen of Philadelphia. As a result, the school became embroiled in numerous controversies, many of them having political coloring. The Commonwealth finally created a Board of Directors of City Trusts in 1869 and placed Girard College under its supervision. Thus Girard's hope of the public administration of the school proved to be abortive.

The difficulties of the school's early years did little to spur its academic development. Alexander Dallas Bache was made president of Girard College in July, 1836. An eminent scholar, he travelled to Europe to study comparable institutions, preparing upon his return in 1838 a Report on Education in Europe, to the Trustees of the Girard College for Orphans. The report is still of value, but its author left the school in 1840 because of the troubles surrounding it.

The construction of the school also preceeded in fits and starts. Girard had provided the site and his will guided the college's construction. Thomas U. Walter, a Philadelphian, won the competition for the design of Girard College, but had to adapt his plan to the desire of Nicholas Biddle, the president of the Board of Trustees, to have the main building in the Greek style. Ground was broken on May 6, 1833, and the cornerstone was placed on July 4, 1833. Fourteen years later the building had been completed. When the architect formally presented the keys of Girard College to its administrator, four additional structures had also been completed. A massive stone wall, one and a quarter miles in length, surrounded the college.

On January 1, 1848, 95 pupils attended the opening ceremonies. Intended originally to educate just orphans, the school, after a decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, later admitted boys who had lost only their fathers. The students wore no uniforms, Girard wishing to avoid any uniform of pauperism. Both practical and academic work was afforded the pupils. Since its opening, the school has continued to implement Girard's trust, to the benefit of Pennsylvania and the Nation.